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LETTER DATED 3 DECEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw to your attention the statement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued on 26 November 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Marjatta RASI
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued on 26 November 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union (EU) and its member States reaffirm their commitment to the Lusaka agreement, which offers the only realistic prospect of lasting peace and security in the Great Lakes region. The EU underlines its readiness to provide full political, diplomatic and resource support for the implementation of the Lusaka agreement provided that the parties show the necessary political will and implement the agreement. The EU urges all parties to refrain from any declaration or action that could jeopardize the peace process.

The EU and its member States will sustain their support for the ceasefire and confidence-building measures, in particular those decided by the Joint Military Commission supervising the military aspects of the agreement. The EU welcomes the deployment of Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Joint Military Commission observers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The EU, for an amount of up to 1.2 million euros, and its member States are providing financial and practical assistance for the Commission. They declare their readiness to continue and as necessary augment this support.

The EU supports the United Nations liaison officers now deploying in the region, which also includes personnel from several EU member States, and welcomes the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The EU also supports the United Nations Secretary-General's recommendations and the draft resolution proposed by Namibia on the next steps to be taken for a rapid deployment of United Nations observers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Union affirms its readiness to support, in due course, a United Nations peacekeeping force to assist the parties in implementing the Lusaka agreement.

The EU stresses the necessity of ensuring a peaceful and permanent disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the militia groups currently operating in the region with a view to promoting justice, national reconciliation and respect of human rights. The EU underlines in particular that members of the ex-Far/Interahamwe accused of crimes of genocide should be brought to justice, while all others who accept the DDR process should be allowed to return to Rwanda without fear of persecution. The EU affirms its willingness to assist the parties in this field.

The EU is ready to support the national dialogue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Commission and the member States have funding available to assist the dialogue, as soon as the parties themselves are ready. The EU calls on all concerned parties to move swiftly and without preconditions to the start of the dialogue, and encourages OAU and President Chiluba in their efforts to, as a first step, identify a suitable facilitator.

The EU stresses its concern at the use of diamonds, gold and other resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fund military operations in the region, and calls on all the parties to ensure that all commercial dealings of this nature are legal under the relevant domestic and international law, transparent, consistent with States' arrangements with the international financing institutions, and benefit the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and not private individuals.

The EU affirms its readiness to provide humanitarian assistance to all those in need in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to make available development assistance once peace is established and mechanisms are in place to allow effective implementation of assistance.

The EU affirms its support for an eventual international conference on security and cooperation in the Great Lakes region to address and resolve the underlying causes of conflict in the region. The EU encourages OAU and all African countries concerned to begin preparatory work as soon as the main elements of the Lusaka agreement have been implemented, and announces its readiness to cooperate with the parties by providing technical and financial assistance in this regard.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.